

Codford St. Peter

Roll of Honour



Lest we Forget

World War I



200203 Lance Sergeant

FREDERICK CHARLES WHATLEY

1/4th BN WILTSHIRE REGIMENT

16th JULY, 1916 Age 21

Frederick Charles WHATLEY

Frederick Charles Whatley was born at Codford St. Peter, Wiltshire to parents William & Mary Ann Whatley (nee White). His birth was registered in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire in the March quarter of 1884.

The 1901 Census records Frederick Charles Whatley as a 5 year old living with his family at Main Road, Codford St. Peter in a four roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as William Whatley (Ordinary Agricultural Labourer, aged 39, born Upton Lovell) & Mary Ann Whatley (aged 36, born Corsley). Five children were also listed – William Henry (Stable Boy on Farm, aged 16, born Sherrington), Albert Edward (aged 12, born Sherrington), Arthur Edwin (aged 8, born Sherrington), Frederick Charles & Frank Alban (aged 4 months, born Codford).

The 1911 Census records Frederick C. Whatley as a 15 year old Apprentice Woolsorter, living with his family at High Road, Codford St. Peter. His parents were listed as William Whatley (Farm Labourer, aged 49) & Mary Whatley (aged 46). Frederick's parents had been married for 27 years & had nine children – all living. Frederick was the oldest of the children listed, the others being Frank A. (aged 10), Elsie M. (aged 8), Alfred J. (aged 5) & Edmund G. (aged 1).

Frederick Charles Whatley enlisted with the Wiltshire Regiment at Warminster. His service number was 200203. Frederick Whatley's records show that he was attached to 1/4th Territorial Force of the Wiltshire Regiment (Duke of Edinburgh's). His residence was listed as Codford St. Peter, Wiltshire. His Medal Index card shows that he was a Corporal with a service number of 1507 T – (Territorial Force). He was renumbered to 200203 but his Medal Index Card does not show any other promotion in rank.

The 1/4th Battalion – Territorial Force of Wiltshire Regiment was at Trowbridge in August, 1914 as part of South-Western Brigade in Wessex Division. They moved to Salisbury Plain & on 9th October, 1914, sailed from Southampton, landing at Bombay on 9th November, 1914. The Division was broken up on arrival in India.

Lance Sergeant Frederick Charles Whatley died on 16th July, 1916, aged 21 years. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission Register for Baghdad (North Gate) Cemetery states that Lance Sergeant Frederick Charles Whatley died of dysentery, contracted whilst a Prisoner of War.

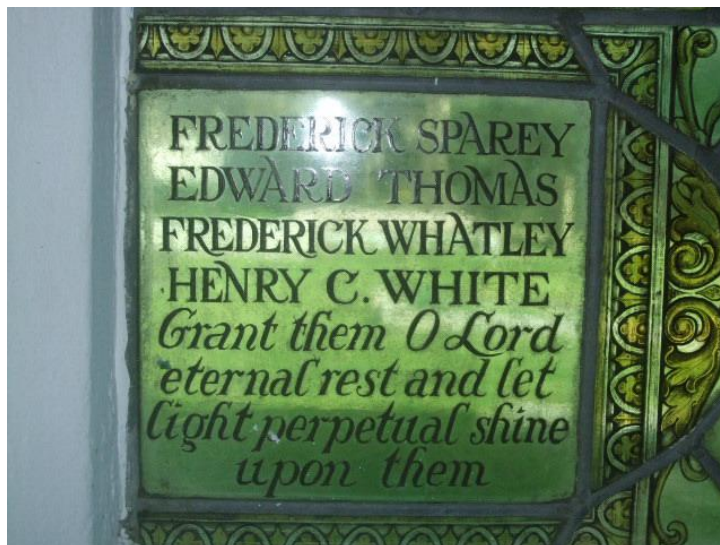
Lance Sergeant Frederick Charles Whatley is buried in the Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery – position XXI. G. 51. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission & as such has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Lance Sergeant Frederick Charles Whatley as the son of William & Mary A Whatley. Born at Codford, Wiltshire.

Lance Sergeant Frederick C. Whatley was entitled to the 1915 Star, British War & Victory Medals. His Medal Index Card shows he had entered a Theatre of War – Asiatic on 24th August, 1915.

F. C. Whatley is remembered as a Casualty of WW1 in the Diocese of Salisbury Memorial Book for Codford St. Peter.

Frederick Whatley is remembered on the World War 1 Stained Glass Memorial window in St. Peter's Church, Codford, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of Romy Wyeth)



Codford St Peter -North aisle By F C Eden, 1920 - War Memorial window with Saints Michael and George (Photo by Rex Harris 2011)

Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery

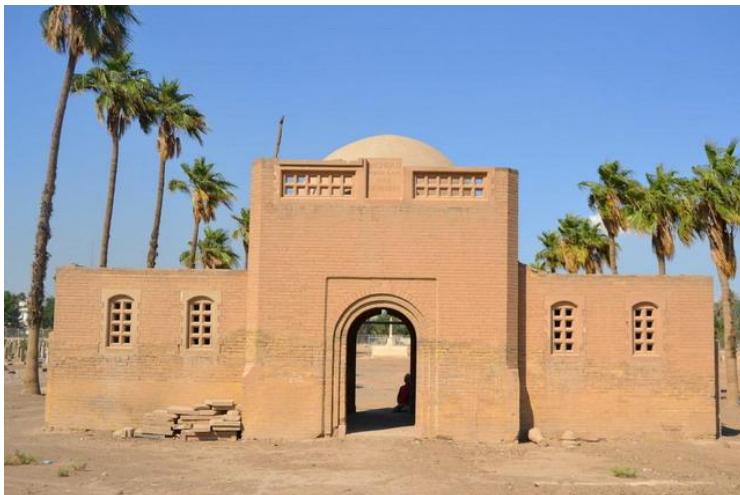
Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery is located in a very sensitive area in the Waziriah area of the Al-Russafa district of Baghdad. It contains 4,455 identified casualties.

In 1914, Baghdad was the headquarters of the Turkish Army in Mesopotamia. The city finally fell in March, 1917, but the position was not fully consolidated until the end of April, 1917. It had by that time become the Expeditionary Forces advanced base, with two stationary hospitals and three casualty clearing stations.

The North Gate Cemetery was begun in April 1917 & has been greatly enlarged since the end of WW1 by graves brought in from other burial grounds in Baghdad & northern Iraq & also from battlefields and cemeteries in Anatolia where Commonwealth Prisoners of War were buried by the Turks.

At present, 4,160 Commonwealth casualties of WW1 are commemorated by name in the cemetery. Unidentified burials from this period number 2,729.

The Cemetery also contains burials from WW2 & contains 127 war graves of other nationalities from both wars, 100 of them Turkish, and 41 non-war graves.



(Photos kindly supplied by Sean McLachlan)



The Baghdad North Gate War Cemetery

([Osprey Blogs](#) – by Sean McLachlan)

In a lonely part of Baghdad in a poor part of town, stands a cemetery to the British Empire's war dead.

Most of the headstones date to the Mesopotamian Campaign of World War One, a gruelling trek across the desert fighting a stubborn Ottoman foe. While the Turks were a danger, disease and heat exhaustion took even more lives. On 20 July 1917, for example, the temperature in Baghdad was 123° F (50.6°C).

The cemetery is poorly maintained. While there is a guard, plastic bags and wrappers from the nearby road blow amidst the headstones and at night it's a popular place for sneaking a drink. Broken beer and whiskey bottles are scattered in the less visible corners of the cemetery.

Despite this, it's still a moving place, where one can read the names of those who served.

The highest-ranking soldier to die in the Mesopotamian campaign was Lt.-Gen. Sir Stanley Maude, who succumbed to cholera on 18 November 1917 after drinking tainted milk.

Many of the troops in the campaign came from India. This is a monument to the Sikh and Hindu soldiers who gave their lives. There's a similar one for Muslim troops.

In a remarkable display of good sportsmanship, there's even a monument to the Turkish troops who died fighting the British army.

Some burials are for later conflicts, especially the numerous revolts against the British Mandate in Iraq, which lasted until 1932.



(Baghdad North Gate War Cemetery – 2012)



(Photos kindly supplied by Sean McLachlan)



Peace in Iraq offers hope for Baghdad's British War Graves

The Telegraph – By Colin Freeman, Baghdad 7 April, 2013

For nearly a century they have stood in a parched, sun-baked corner of Baghdad, reminders of a long-forgotten conflict fought by long-forgotten regiments.

In the city's North Gate Cemetery are the graves of thousands of servicemen from Britain's Mesopotamian Campaign of World War One, who braved heatstroke, cholera and determined Turkish troops to seize Baghdad from the Ottoman Empire.

Bearing the names of bygone regiments like the South Wales Borderers and the Buffs, today the headstones are bleached and cracked by the same harsh climate that killed many of the men whose lives they commemorate.

Yet in the decade that has passed since the latest British military campaign in Iraq, the marble slabs have had more than just Iraq's 50C summer heat to deal with.

Thanks to the violence that has gripped the Iraqi capital since Saddam Hussein's fall, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has been unable to maintain the vast graveyard, causing it to fall into disrepair. And like the men who are buried beneath them, the headstones themselves have suffered their fair share of incoming fire.

"A big car bomb hit an embassy just outside the cemetery in 2009, which knocked many of the stones over or broke them in two," explained the cemetery's Iraqi caretaker as he took *The Sunday Telegraph* on a tour around the overgrown, litter-strewn plots last month. "And since then, there has also been damage from random mortar fire and rockets – this area used to see quite a bit of fighting."

Now, though, with security in Iraq gradually improving, the commission is finally hopeful of restoring the cemetery to pristine condition again, along with 12 other graveyards and memorials across the country.

Over the past year at North Gate, a team of Iraqi contractors have begun to replace some 500 damaged headstones, drawing on a stock of ready-engraved replacement slabs that actually arrived in Baghdad just after the First Gulf War in 1990.

The commission had hoped to lay them at the time, but found it impossible due to the worsening of diplomatic relations between Iraq and Britain.

Instead, the replacement slabs were left in metal containers just next to the cemetery, which were finally opened only last year.

"The stones inside the containers were completely intact and even had the original manifest still with them," said Peter Francis, a spokesman for the commission's offices in Maidenhead, Berks.

At North Gate, the gleaming new replacement headstones now stand out amid the cemetery's crumbling, greying rows, commemorating men like 7661 Private J Aitken, of the Cameron Highlanders, who died on Sept 3, 1916, and 56570 Private D Murray, of the Northumberland Fusiliers, who died on May 19, 1918.

Still awaiting repair is the cemetery's Cross of Sacrifice, which, according to the caretaker, was damaged by the 2009 car bomb. It went off outside the embassy of Britain's former foe, Turkey, which overlooks the cemetery. Today the cross stands minus its crossbar on a patch of open ground between the graves, which doubles as a football pitch for local children.

The Mesopotamian campaign that men like Ptes Murray and Aitken gave their lives for was overshadowed by the epic battles in Europe, yet was every bit as tough. It began at the outset of the war in 1914, and like the later conflict of 2003, the invasion took place around the southern port area of Basra.

However, after initially going in to secure refineries on the Shatt al Arab estuary belonging to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, the British forces pressed on north to a military disaster in the city of Kut, where 12,800 of them eventually surrounded after a five-month Turkish siege. More than a third then died due to the brutal conditions they suffered as POWs.

Having suffering one of its most humiliating military defeats ever, Britain then invaded again with an Anglo-Indian army led by the Boer War veteran, Lieutenant General Sir Stanley Maude, which took Baghdad on March 11, 1917.

Maude himself then died of cholera just six months later, and has a small mausoleum in the middle of the cemetery.

Altogether North Gate has commemorates some 4,160 World War One casualties, while in total, the Commonwealth war sites around Iraq honour more than 54,000 servicemen from both World Wars. The figures dwarf the casualties of the modern Iraqi campaign, in which 4,487 American and 179 British troops were killed.

Despite the insurgencies that successive British military actions in Iraq here have provoked, the war graves have seldom been the target of vandalism or sabotage.

But at North Gate, the caretaker, whose name *The Sunday Telegraph* is withholding for security reasons, does tell stories of having to occasionally defend the turf from marauders. One day, not long after the fall of Saddam, he saw from his house overlooking the cemetery a group of supporters of the former president coming through a hole in the fence.

"The cemetery was very overgrown at the time, and they were carrying cans of petrol to set it all ablaze," said the caretaker, whose father and grandfather also did the same job.

"I grabbed a Kalashnikov that I keep at my house and fired several shots in their direction, and they fled. They were doing it out of hatred, they did not realise that this is a site with important heritage."

On other occasions, the cemetery has been used by drunks and tramps, and even by Iraqis practising witchcraft, for whom soil occupied by non-Muslim tombs is said to have special magical properties.

"One day I caught a woman burying a spell written on a piece of paper that she had wrapped in a piece of her hijab," the caretaker added. "She said she was having trouble conceiving, and that a witch had told her to come here."

Mr Francis, the CWGC spokesman, said that the continuing security threats in Iraq continued to place "severe limitations" on the restoration work that could be done on the country's war cemeteries, with work in the past limited to occasional maintenance projects via Iraqi contractors. But he said that planning was under way for a future "major renovations" programme.

"We are working closely with the British Embassy in Baghdad to develop a wider maintenance capacity on the ground via potential working partners," he said.

"We have not forgotten or abandoned the cemeteries in Iraq. As soon as the situation permits, we will restore them to a standard befitting the sacrifice of those buried and commemorated there."



Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery located in the Waziriah Area of the Al-Russafa district of Baghdad Photo: Julian Simmonds for the Telegraph